

Appl. No. 10/692,030
Reply to Office Action of November 15, 2004

Attorney Docket No. 2002.0130/24061.468
Customer No. 42717

REMARKS

Claims 16 and 32-45 have been canceled, and Claims 1, 6 and 17-31 have been amended. Claims 1-15 and 17-31 are present in the application. Applicants have previously paid filing fees that are sufficient to cover the total number of claims and also the number of independent claims that are now present in this application. Thus, no additional filing fee is due in association with the submission of this Amendment. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application, as amended.

New Power of Attorney

As a courtesy, the attention of the Examiner is respectfully directed to the fact that a new Power of Attorney has been filed. In particular, the pending Office Action was mailed on November 15, 2004. A few days later, on December 6, 2004, Applicants filed a new Power of Attorney. The new Power reflects the fact that responsibility for this application has been transferred from the law firm of George O. Saile & Associates to the law firm of Haynes and Boone L.L.P. It is assumed that, by now, the new Power of Attorney has been properly entered into the PTO's records for this application, including entry of the new correspondence address into the PTO computer. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner take a moment and verify that the Power and the new correspondence address have in fact been entered, so that the next communication will be mailed to the new correspondence address and not the obsolete correspondence address.

Allowed Claims

Noted with appreciation is the indication in the Office Action that Claims 1-15 have been allowed. Applicants noted two minor problems of antecedent relationship in Claim 1, and one minor problem of antecedent relationship in Claim 6. Amendments have been made at two locations in Claim 1 and at one location in Claim 6, so that each of these antecedent relationships

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will be clear. These minor corrections do not alter the scope of either Claim 1 or Claim 6.
Claims 1-15 are thus all still in condition for allowance.

Allowable Claims

Also noted with appreciation is the indication that Claims 27 and 29-31 recite allowable subject matter, and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form. Claim 27 depended from Claim 16, and the limitations of Claim 16 have been added to Claim 27 in order to place Claim 27 in independent form. This change does not alter the scope of Claim 27. Claim 27 should thus now be in proper condition for allowance, and notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Claims 17-26 and 28-31 all depended from Claim 16. Since Claim 16 has been canceled and since the limitations of Claim 16 have all been added to Claim 27, Claims 17-26 and 28-31 have each been amended so that they now depend from allowable Claim 27, rather than from Claim 16. Claims 17-26 and 28 should thus be allowable with Claim 27. As to Claims 29-31, these claims were already indicated to be separately allowable. The limitations of Claim 27 are such that amending Claims 29-31 to depend from Claim 27 rather than from Claim 16 does not in any way narrow the scope of any of Claims 29-31. Claims 17-26 and 28-31 should thus all now be in condition for allowance, and notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Comment on Statement of Reasons for Allowance

In Section 4 on page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner offers (1) a statement of reasons why Claims 1-15 are considered to recite allowable subject matter, and (2) a statement of reasons why Claims 27 and 29-31 are considered to recite allowable subject matter. Applicants agree that Claims 1-15, 27 and 29-31 each recite allowable subject matter. However, Applicants do not agree in all respects with the stated reasons. For example, Applicants believe that the stated reasons should not be interpreted to mean that they are the only reasons supporting the

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allowability of these claims, and that there are no other reasons that separately and independently support the allowability of the independent claims and/or the dependent claims.

Canceled Claims

Claims 32-45 were withdrawn from examination, pursuant to a restriction requirement. As discussed above, the examined claims that now remain are all believed to be in proper condition for allowance. Accordingly, withdrawn Claims 32-45 have been canceled. However, Applicants reserve the right to file a divisional application that presents the subject matter of Claims 32-45 for examination on the merits.

Conclusion

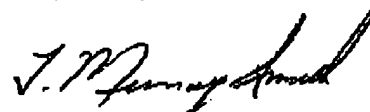
Based on the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all of the pending claims are fully allowable, and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that examination of the present application may be advanced in any way by a telephone conference, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney at 972-739-8647.

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Although Applicants believe that no fee is due in association with the filing of this Amendment, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fee required by this paper, or to credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 08-1394 of Haynes and Boone LLP.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: January 13, 2005

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Enclosures: None

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